

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name I.O.O.F. LODGE

other names/site number 141-0140-0006

2. Location

street & number NW CORNER OF NICHOLAS AND MILL STREETS not for publication

city or town ALTON vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county OSBORNE code 141 zip code 67623

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Sankwitz 3-11-02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I.O.O.F. LODGE
Name of Property

OSBORNE COUNTY, ALTON
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: BUSINESS
SOCIAL: MEETING HALL

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: LIMESTONE
walls STONE: LIMESTONE
roof METAL: TIN; SYNTHETICS: RUBBER
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1885 - 1952

Significant Dates

1885, 1899

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I.O.O.F. LODGE
Name of Property

OSBORNE COUNTY, ALTON
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 4	5 0 4 4 8 0	4 3 6 7 1 5 0
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title HOMER SMUCK

organization BULL CITY FOUNDATION INC. date JUNE 2001

street & number P.O. BOX 161 telephone 785-984-2563

city or town ALTON state KS zip code 67623

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name LARRY BALES

street & number 1509 S. 257TH AVENUE telephone 785-984-2548

city or town ALTON state KS zip code 67623

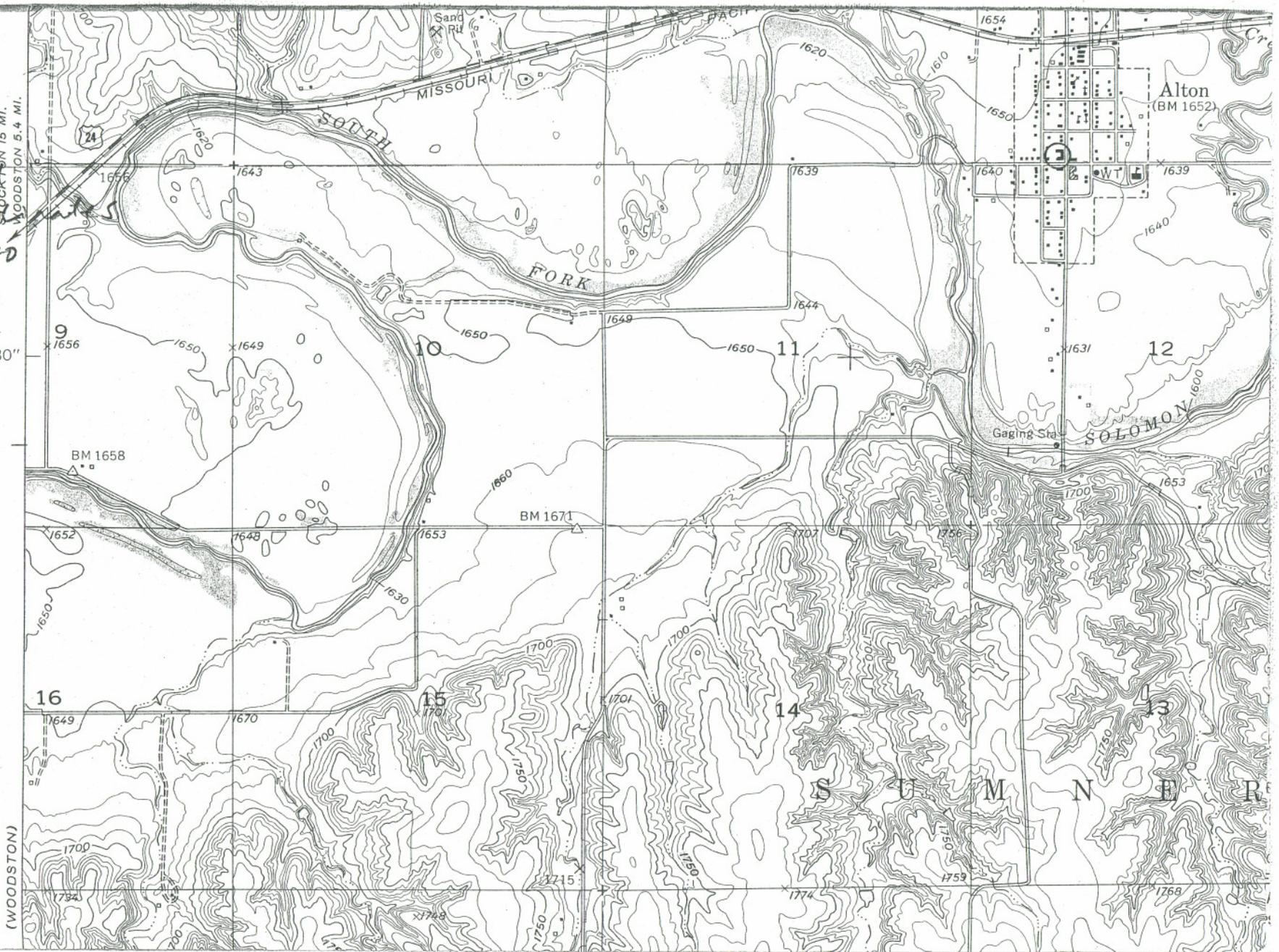
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

IOOF Lodge
Altm Quad
UTM Coordinates
14 504 480
4367150

WOODSTON 15 MI.
WOODSTON 5.4 MI.

27'30"



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The Custer Lodge #166 Independent Order Of The Odd Fellows Building (c.1885) is located at the North West corner of Mill and Nicholas Streets in Alton, Osborne County, Kansas. The two-story, limestone building has an eastern front orientation and measures 80 feet from east to west and 30 feet from north to south. The rear 30 feet was added in c.1899 as well as adding height to the existing building to provide needed slant for roof drainage. The flat, wooden roof, overlaid with tin and asphalt, covers the entire building. The building's eastern facade provides the exterior with its major character defining features.

The rusticated stone facade is broken on the storefront level by cast iron columns on either side of the double doors. The storefront is constructed of limestone rock, wood and plate glass windows with a tin awning. The windowed double doors are indented behind the storefront line with an iron-floored entryway into the building. A glass transom is used above the double doors. Two double hung windows on the upper level surmounted by arched limestone block lintels and undergirded by limestone sills fenestrate the facade. A pressed metal cornice with brackets follows along the top of the building's front roof line. Tooled, limestone blocks stacked vertically accentuate the building's two front corners on the first level. The limestone facade is spalling.

The interior is defined by a large commercial space on the first level and a large meeting room on the second level. On the first level the original rear limestone rock wall between the original building and the 30 foot addition still contains two large windows and the door. The floor plan retains a high degree of integrity on the second level. Original woodwork and floors are apparent on both the first and second floors. A higher decorative quality, employing walnut wood, constructs the door and window casings and baseboards on the second level. The floor plan includes a small half circle side stage on both the north and south sides, a larger half circle stage on the west end and a large rectangular stage crossing the entire width of the meeting room on the east end.

The first floor has served as a retail store and later as an office for the City of Alton and the City Clerk. The upper floor has always been used by various lodges for a meeting room. Access to the second level is provided by a walled off staircase on the north side of the building with a street entry. The floor plan still maintains the original character on both levels with the exception of a small room partitioned off the front 20 feet of the first level which was used by the City.

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The Custer Lodge #166 Independent Order Of The Odd Fellows Building (c.1885) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion A for its historical association with the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows and other Alton lodges. It was also used as a lodge for local chapters of the Rebeccas, Masons, Eastern Star, Knights of Pythias and Woodmen. The building is also being nominated under criterion C for its architectural significance as a late nineteenth century vernacular, limestone building. The Odd Fellows Lodge Building stands as a late nineteenth and twentieth century commercial and cultural landmark in the downtown business district of Alton.

The Odd Fellows Building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity as an example of a two-part commercial block. The building's rusticated limestone facade stands as an anchoring structure to other buildings that are still intact along Alton's Mill (main) Street. The rusticated stone facade is broken on the storefront level by cast iron columns on either side of the double doors. The storefront is constructed of limestone rock, wood and plate glass windows with a tin awning. The windowed double doors are indented behind the storefront line with an iron-floored entryway into the building. A glass transom is used above the double doors. Two double hung windows on the upper level surmounted by arched limestone block lintels and undergirded by limestone sills fenestrate the facade. A pressed metal cornice with brackets follows along the top of the building's front roof line. Tooled, limestone blocks stacked vertically accentuate the building's two front corners on the first level. The limestone facade is spalling.

Richard Longstreth writes about the two-part commercial block in The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. "The two-part commercial block is the most common type of composition used for small and moderate sized commercial buildings through the country. Generally limited to structures of two to four stories, this type is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones. These zones may be similar while clearly separated from one another; they may be harmonious, but quite different in character; or they may have little visual relationship. The two-part division reflects difference in the use inside. The single-story lower zone, at street level, indicates public spaces such as retail stores, a banking room, insurance or hotel lobby. The upper zone suggests more private spaces, including offices, hotel rooms or a meeting hall. The type has been used to accommodate a wide range of functions and is readily found in almost all forms of commercial development, dominating the core of small cities and towns as well as many neighborhood commercial areas."

Western settlement pioneers had a particular need in being drawn to associate with fraternal lodges. The lodges provided practical security on the frontier that was not available in any other way. They provided a safety net for such practical needs as care in sickness, distress or death and care of dependents when family funds were depleted. They cared for widows and children and saw that orphaned children were educated.

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Most members joined for the desire to help others. Fraternal orders were also an opportunity to socialize at lodge meetings, dinners, dances, other lodge functions and activities. There were those who enjoyed the community status afforded those participating in the conferring of dramatic degrees and the opportunity of learning the proper way of delivering various charges in degrees. Women had counterpart orders to that of the men and enjoyed the lodges for the same reasons.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows has the motto, "to visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead and educate the orphan." In The Three Link Fraternity - Odd Fellowship in California, Don R. Smith and Wayne Roberts write, "Lodges commonly provided all kinds of assistance to members who were in need, such as a box of groceries, a cord of wood for a member, visiting nurse for a seriously ill member at home..... Burying the dead was taken very seriously by early Odd Fellows..... In many areas all phases of the burial were provided by the Odd Fellows in the earlier days."

Free Masonry has similar stated purposes. In Illustrations of Masonry by William Preston in 1772, page 72, we read, "To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Freemasons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the great aim we have in view. On this basis we form our friendships and establish our connections."

On their web page, "www.pythias.org/pythdo" it is stated that: "The members of the Fraternal Order Knights of Pythias are deeply involved in their communities ... Their social and charitable activities are directed towards enhancing the great principles of the Order - FRIENDSHIP, CHARITY, and BENEVOLENCE. These principles are adhered to very strongly through contributions of money, time, efforts and supplies to Pythians and nonPythians alike. The eventual aim and goal is the betterment of mankind. ... The strength of the Pythian Order is its ability to meet the needs of the local community as seen and accepted by the local members. ... There is still time to fraternize and socialize as individuals and as groups ..."

During the 1800s and early 1900s, fraternal orders grew dramatically. With no governmental assistance and often few or no extended family members in close proximity, the lodges provided an opportunity for early settlers to band together for practical and social support. If disaster was to come there was confidence and comfort that help would be given by the local lodge. This was especially true of young, small towns and communities where there were few other developed community groups who could respond to and aid with critical human needs. Small towns were quite self-contained with all the basic supplies, stores and services within them. They did not have the resource of a large citizenry, nor close relationships with nearby towns from which to rally support to meet human need, let alone developed community groups. For these reasons, fraternal order lodges served the need for social security in an even greater way for small towns.

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The Custer #166 Odd Fellows Lodge met for some time without a charter. They organized March 6, 1880, with six charter members and grew rapidly. The Masons were chartered on February 15, 1882, as Occidental Lodge # 207, A. F. & A. M. (This date is a discrepancy from Cutler's history that reports it was organized in 1880.) The Knights of Pythias was established on October 1, 1882. The Odd Fellows first meeting place, which they shared with the Masons, was a second story room above a drug store. This structure, the Smith Building (built in 1874) is currently owned by Hartzler's Hardware Store.

General Hiram C. Bull and Lyman T. Earl co-founded the Town of Bull City (which later became Alton) west along the Solomon River in 1870. The first town to be established in Osborne County, Alton became a strong community of commercial activity and a point from which pioneer supplies were provided by General Bull and his store. Bull established the Post Office in the fall of 1870 and became its first Post Master. Within ten years there were other mercantile stores, banks, mills, hotels, lumber yards, drug stores, schools, churches and a newspaper. The first lodge, established in 1880 was soon followed by others.

T. J. Thurston came to Alton in 1880. He operated a grocery and restaurant businesses until 1882 and then sold out and left town for about fifteen months. Thurston returned to Alton in May of 1884 and bought out M. Grant, who had established a mercantile business in 1880. In July of 1884 Thurston took A. G. Grubb as a partner in the business.

The Alton Empire reported in its August 29, 1885 issue that the firm of Thurston & Grubb was "doing a very satisfactory and profitable business, so much so that their present quarters are much too small, and in August they will move into their new, commodious, and handsome store on main street in town. It will be 24 x 60 feet, and the second floor will be used by the Odd Fellows as a lodge room. Stone is used in the construction of this block, and, so far as anyone can judge now, it will be a fine structure. Messrs. Thurston & Grubb carry a full line of general merchandise, and when they are settled in their new building there will be embraced in dry goods, clothing, boots, shoes, hats, caps, groceries etc. that can be found there in abundance, as they aim to carry \$5,000 in stock."

When Thurston & Grubb constructed their building, the second floor was occupied in 1885 by the Custer Lodge #166 of the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows who used it continuously until December, 1986 when they disbanded. At some undetermined point, the Odd Fellows began to share and later rented to their sister organization, the Rebeccas and other organizations such as the Masons and Eastern Star, the Woodmen, Knights of Pythias, and the Grand Army of the Republic. The Masons used the second story lodge meeting room until December, 1977, when they disbanded.

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The building eventually became known as the Odd Fellows Lodge Building because the second floor was created for the lodge at its construction and they later purchased it in 1899. It was never used for any other purpose and has always been a large open room. When the Odd Fellows bought and expanded the building in c.1899, the upstairs expansion included the kitchen, robe and vestments closets, entry room and secrecy "peepholes" that supported lodge principles and activities. Its size and prominence in the downtown business district strongly indicate the importance and significance of lodges and their service in the community. Everyone knew where they met. The prominence of the building symbolized status and security.

In August of 1887, A. G. Grubb sold his interest in the building to T. J. Thurston. In February, 1895 Thurston sold the building to Mary A. Beeman who in turn sold the building in February 1899 to the Trustees of the Custer Lodge #166 of the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows.

In c.1899 the Odd Fellows added a 30 foot two story addition to the west end of the original 50 foot building. The existing building was also made higher at this time to create the needed slant of the roof for proper drainage. The ground floor addition was an extension of retail activity of the first floor. The second level of the added room became a kitchen, entry rooms and ceremonial vestments storage to serve the existing lodge meeting room.

Both Mary A. Beeman and later the Odd Fellows rented the first floor to businesses. It is not established with known sources what businesses were housed in the building after Thurston closed out his mercantile business in 1886. In 1925 John Van Scyoc began operating an undertaking business as well as selling furniture on the first floor. In 1953, John Van Scyoc moved the undertaking business to Osborne and the building was unused except for storage. The City of Alton rented the front part of the first floor for the City Clerk's Office from 1963 until 1988. From that point on the building has been used for storage.

In 1987 Douglas Snedker purchased the building from the Odd Fellows, he in turn sold it in 1989 to Wayne Carlin who used it for storage for his auction business. In 2000 Larry Bales purchased the building with the intent of preserving it and establishing a museum and arts center.

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Major Bibliographical References

Cutler, William G. History of the State of Kansas. (Chicago: Andreas, 1883).

Endsley, Niles. The History of Bull City. (The Osborne County Farmer: Osborne, Kansas, 1970).

Knights of Pythias. Website; www.pythias.org/pythdo.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. (Washington: Preservation Press, 1987).

Preston, William. Illustrations of Masonry. No publisher provided. (1772). Page 72.

Smith, Don R. and Roberts, Wayne. The Three Link Fraternity - Odd Fellowship in California. (Linden Publications, 1993).

Western Empire. (Alton, Kansas). August 29, 1885, May 22, 1886.

Osborne County Farmer. (Osborne, Kansas). December 18, 1886.

Osborne County Register of Deeds. Warranty Deed: Book R, page 518. Warranty Deed: Book AI, page 395.

Clark-Gashaw Mortuary. Osborne, Kansas. Mortuary records.

Osborne Masons Lodge records. Osborne, Kansas.

Stanfield, Forrest. Alton, Kansas. Interview as a former Alton businessman.

Welker, Lillian. Ellsworth, Kansas. Interview as a former Alton City Clerk.

Yost, Leroy. Osborne, Kansas. Interview as a former Custer Lodge #166 Odd Fellows member.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located beginning at a point 29 feet North of the Southeast corner of Lot 5, in Block 21, Fifield's 2nd Addition to the City of Alton, Kansas, thence North 41 feet, thence West 132 feet, thence South 41 feet, thence East 132 feet to the point of beginning. The property is bounded by Mill Street to the east and adjacent property lines on all other sides.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains all property historically associated with it.